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## Eager Street

Kendra Kopelke

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## Eager Street · *Kendra Kopelke*

I drag my shirt across the floor  
with my foot, kick the shoes  
under the couch and everything  
is out of order. Even the goldfish  
plant is growing in wrong directions,  
its pot too close to the window,  
leaves rotting on the sill to dust.  
Everyone knows the women in Baltimore  
wash their front steps each week.  
On their knees, on Saturday,  
they rub their palms hard against  
the marble, as their children play  
together on the sidewalk. But you and I  
share another kind of order,  
when you're gone, I can see  
where you've been, which towel  
you dried your hair with, what magazine  
you read at dinner. Some weeks  
we barely speak, but if we're lucky,  
by morning our bodies drift together,  
our talk curls to the center of the bed  
like a daughter. And the clothes  
covering the furniture are forgiven.  
Forgiven, yet still not put away,  
it's how we live through each  
unfolding season. We drive  
our guests down Eager Street,  
point out the marble stairs,  
the strong women, the generations  
of commitment. It's a good story.  
These things out of order make  
a difference. There is a dream  
inside each glass on the dresser,  
each book on the floor. Cleaning  
would be a lie.

But tonight, I remember back  
to our first winter on a southern coast,  
you were picking the beach clean  
of shells, stuffing them in your pocket,  
you were just a little ahead of me  
when you spotted a flat shell shaped  
like a fish and you tossed it hard  
into the waves. You kept your back  
to me a long time. You must have been  
wishing hard then, for something  
like our lives, to matter.